

Exhibit 17

DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH & ITALIAN

Francophone panel discussion marked the launch of the festival



Students and community members packed an East Pyne lecture hall on Tuesday, February 18th to hear a panel of diplomats discuss the role of the French language in international relations.

The event marked the beginning of the Department's spring festival, "Celebrating Diversity in the Francophone World"—a new initiative that will allow undergraduate students enrolled in French courses to engage with French-speaking guests from around the globe on a wide range of topics. The panel, titled "Le rôle de la Francophonie sur la scène internationale: regards croisés de l'OIF et d'Etats membres," was organized

in collaboration with the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

The four panelists were Ambassador Leon Kacou Adom of Cote-D'Ivoire, President of the Group of French-speaking ambassadors and Ambassador Issa Konfourou of Mali, both permanent representatives to the UN; Corina Lefter, a diplomat at the Permanent Mission of Romania to the United Nations; and Patricia Herdt, the Deputy Permanent Representative of the International Organization of La Francophonie in New York City.

The panelists first presented their professional trajectories and the way in which they collaborate with the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie. Ms. Herdt gave an overview of the OIF, explaining its origin and the way its role and missions have evolved over the years, citing the diversity of collaborations with partner states in many different domains, such as education and training, outreach to young people, access to information technologies, consolidation of peace and democracy, equity of rights for women and sustainable development, to name but a few.

The guest speakers then discussed the ways that the use of the French language influences negotiations, decision-making and peacekeeping processes.

The speakers addressed the political history of the French language, noting that many French-speaking countries share a common legacy of colonization. In his remarks, Ambassador Konfourou emphasized the fact that in today's globalized world, French-language education provides students with access to the entire Francophone world, through jobs and volunteer work as well as travel. All panelists stated the importance of pooling of resources and means, and the fact that the global reach of French helps smooth cooperation between countries and gives them a common voice on the international stage.

The panel concluded with an audience Q&A session. Questions touched on the OIF, its missions, collaborations, and challenges, as well as current international affairs, such as the diplomatic relationship between France and Mali

A reception following the panel allowed students to meet and speak with the diplomats.

This kind of interaction will be continued throughout the festival and in future projects in the French program. The aim is to have students use their French skills *in vivo*, to read and prepare to discuss real-life issues with outside speakers from the Francophone

world, to expand their learning beyond the classroom walls, and reflect on political and cultural issues within the Francophone world.

Professor Christine Sagnier and Professor Carole Trévisé, both recipients of the 250th Fund for Innovation in Undergraduate Education, have been working with the University's administration for over a year to plan the slate of events. It will include many panel discussions with guest speakers from all over the Francophone world, a cooking demonstration with French-speaking campus dining workers, some master classes in creative musical writing by a Franco-Senegalese artist and a musical performance by a Franco-Senegalese band.

The panel, along with additional festival events, was made possible by support from campus organizations: The 250th Anniversary Fund for Innovation in Undergraduate Education, The Department of French and Italian, Canadian Studies, The Humanities Council, The Lewis Center for the Arts, The Program for Community-Engaged Scholarship at Princeton University (ProCES) and The Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies.